

CUBA'S FREEDOM ASSURED.

SPAIN'S REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT MAKES THAT CERTAIN.

Whether it is to be Accomplished by Peace or War is for Spain to Decide—Spain's Reply Received by the Administration as Entirely Unsatisfactory and by Congress as Bordering on the Impertinent—The Refusal to the Destruction of the Maine to Considered Little Less Than Brutal—The President to Refer the Whole Question to Congress for Action in a Message That May Not Be Completed Until Tuesday Next.

WASHINGTON, April 1.—Cuban freedom in the near future has been assured by Spain's reply to the demands of President McKinley for the ending of the war and the granting of independence. That reply, which was delivered to the President at 11 o'clock last night, was a surprise both in its tone and contents, and it apparently leaves nothing to be done but to turn the whole Cuban question over to Congress, where it will be settled with little delay. Whether Cuban freedom is to be accomplished by peace or war is now entirely for Spain to decide. It also maintains her present attitude, war, it seems, must follow as surely as night the day. There is apparently only one way by which it can be avoided now, and that is the evacuation of Cuba by the Spanish Army and the voluntary relinquishment of the island to the Cubans.

There is no reason to believe, however, that Spain contemplates any such step. Her reply to the President's demand for the cessation of hostilities is brief and almost flippant in its tone. It is regarded by the President and his Cabinet as entirely unsatisfactory, and by Congress and by the Washington public as bordering on the impertinent. The full text of Minister Woodford's message giving Spain's answer is not yet known, but the substance of it is given in the following statement prepared by Assistant Secretary Day and issued to the public after the regular meeting of the Cabinet this morning:

The following is an abstract from the telegram received from Gen. Woodford on the evening of March 31, 1898, on the general situation in Cuba. He informs the Government of the United States that Gen. Blanco has revoked the "bando" relating to the reconcentration of the western provinces of Cuba, which are under the command of Matanzas, Santa Clara, Havana and Pinar del Rio; that the Spanish Government has placed at the disposal of the American General the credit of 3,000,000 pesetas (\$600,000) to the end that the country people may return at once and with success to their labors.

The Spanish Government will accept whatever assistance to feed and succor the necessitous that may be sent from the United States in accordance with the plan now in operation. It proposes to confide the preparation for an honorable and stable peace to the Insular Parliament, without prejudice to the concurrence the Spanish Government would not be able to arrive at the final result, it being understood that the powers reserved by the Constitution to the central Government are not lessened or diminished.

The Spanish Government will not meet until May 4, the Spanish Government will not, on its part, object to a suspension of hostilities if asked for by the Insurgents from the General-in-Chief, to whom it will belong to determine the duration and the condition of the suspension.

Only one important question remains to be settled, and that is the question of the blockade of the Cuban coast. This question is untouched in this statement, which, contrary to general opinion, is very brief, being less than twice as long as the statement itself. This omission is the reference made by the Spanish Government to the "incident" at the destruction of the Maine. The report of the Naval Court of Inquiry submitted to Congress last Monday. Why the President neglected to submit this part of the message to the public is not known, but probably he felt that public feeling was already sufficiently inflamed against Spain, and that it would be wiser for more reasons to be advanced to the public to justify the Spanish Government's reference to what has been the active cause in bringing the controversy with Spain to a head is little less than insulting. Not more than fifty words of Spain's reply is devoted to that part of the President's message. The report of the Naval Court of Inquiry submitted to Congress last Monday. Why the President neglected to submit this part of the message to the public is not known, but probably he felt that public feeling was already sufficiently inflamed against Spain, and that it would be wiser for more reasons to be advanced to the public to justify the Spanish Government's reference to what has been the active cause in bringing the controversy with Spain to a head is little less than insulting. Not more than fifty words of Spain's reply is devoted to that part of the President's message.

Spain's reply, indeed, is not only at all, for it simply says that the Spanish Government proposes to do, instead of stating whether it will do what this Government says must be done. The proposition for delay until the Cuban Parliament meets in May was not seriously considered by the Cabinet for a moment. Almost without exception the President's advisers decided, the moment the reading of Minister Woodford's message was completed, that it was a peaceful ultimatum, and that the task of making the final accounting with Spain should be turned over to Congress, as was agreed when the warlike spirit of the Senators and Representatives became manifest the day after the report of the Naval Court of Inquiry was published. President McKinley's programme of action, now that Spain has made her decision, has not yet been finally decided. It is said on good authority that, notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of avoiding war with Spain, he still thinks there is a shadow of a chance for securing Cuban independence without war, and it is understood that one member of the Cabinet, Mr. Gage, is inclined to agree with him. Just what plans the President has in mind for accomplishing this end are not known. At the second Cabinet session of the day, held at 5 o'clock this morning, the President allowed the members of the Cabinet to express their views on the matter, and the meeting adjourned without having reached a conclusion as to what the next step should be.

Whatever further representation the President may make to Spain, however, if any, will be after his purpose to send a message to Congress as soon as he can write it, reviewing the history of the diplomatic negotiations with the Spanish Government since they were commenced in the Administration of his predecessor, and bringing them down to the moment when he signs the message. To that task he has already set himself, but the character of his recommendations to Congress has not yet been fully decided on. It has been suggested by some of those who have consulted with the President to-day that he may answer Spain's last message by sending an ultimatum answerable in twenty-four hours and to attach to the message to Congress a copy of it. If this is not done it will probably be decided to totally ignore to-day's message from Minister Woodford. That course would be a sufficient answer in itself.

Tonight the President is at the White House engaged in the work of arranging the material to be used in the preparation of his elaborate and important message that he will submit to Congress early in the

week. Assistant Secretaries Day and Ade of the State Department and one or two Cabinet officials dropped in for a moment's conversation, but the leaders of the Senate and House upon whom he has depended so much during the important transactions of the week, took a brief respite and remained away from the White House tonight. Tomorrow, however, further consultations will be held with the Speaker and leading men of the House and Senate.

The President is almost worn out by the distractions and exacting duties and the strain of the present week, but these have not deterred him from his duty. He has been talking with him to-day, having reached the beginning of the end of the long controversy, he is facing the result with calmness and hopefulness. To-day was the busiest and most laborious of any week. The President was in his office by 9 o'clock, and at 11 the Cabinet met. In the meantime he attended to some routine business, and consulted with a score or more of distinguished callers. As soon as Spain's reply had been read to the Cabinet the task of preparing for possible war was begun, and when the first step called for by the Spanish Government was taken, the President had been arranged public announcement was made of the diplomatic situation as it stands. Then the question of the legislative programme was taken up, and Speaker Reed, who has stood by the President as loyally and as earnestly as any man, was sent for. Mr. Reed, who is one of the big, strong men of the House, was opposed to intervention in Cuban affairs and is opposed to war. But if it is to come he will lead the party in the House of Representatives in hearty support of the President.

Then the rub of important matters was taken up. The President snatched an hour for his daily drive to get a breath of fresh air. Mrs. McKinley accompanied him to-day. At 5 o'clock the Cabinet met for the second session of the day. It was almost dinner time when the official conference broke up, and after dinner the President, at his desk, was mapping out the message which would be the most important one of this Administration, and more portentous, indeed, than any of President since the days of Abraham Lincoln. Shortly after 11 o'clock the President retired to get a good night's rest before facing tomorrow's numerous tasks.

The President has led some of those who talked with him to-day to believe that he has good and sufficient reason to hope that there is yet a chance for a settlement with Spain on the basis of diplomatic negotiations. The President's confidence in the Spanish Government is not, however, as strong as it was some time ago. He is unable to ascertain the cause of the faith that is in him. A careful reading of the President's statement, based on Minister Woodford's message, fails to reveal that it has a double meaning, or that it means anything but an honest, open reply to the demands of the United States.

Speaker Reed was called in consultation at the second Cabinet meeting to-day, his counsel being desired in arranging for the legislative programme that will follow the announcement of the President's message. When the order of Congress for the immediate action to him, the President's question was cooled by the request of the President that time be given him to make one last appeal to Spain, the assurance was given that the matter would be submitted to them for settlement not later than Monday. It is now impossible, however, that the message will be sent by the President, and it is probable that the President will not be physically able to complete it. One of those at to-day's Cabinet meeting said:

"Why, if the President should begin to write now and not stop until next Monday morning at 1 o'clock, he would not be able to put in all the time that he intends to say in making up the record on which Congress may determine to declare war."

It may be Tuesday, or perhaps Wednesday, therefore, when the President ends his task, but Congress will be patient and wait. They will wait until the President has laid out his plan, in view of the fact that he has agreed to temporize no longer with Spain. The President now fully realizes that the desire of the people, as expressed by their representatives in Congress for an immediate complete, satisfactory settlement of the Cuban question, is not to be denied. The President is now fully realizing that the desire of the people, as expressed by their representatives in Congress for an immediate complete, satisfactory settlement of the Cuban question, is not to be denied.

The legislative programme to follow the submission of the President's message to Congress is a question of the utmost importance, but nothing definite has yet been arranged. The President is now fully realizing that the desire of the people, as expressed by their representatives in Congress for an immediate complete, satisfactory settlement of the Cuban question, is not to be denied. The President is now fully realizing that the desire of the people, as expressed by their representatives in Congress for an immediate complete, satisfactory settlement of the Cuban question, is not to be denied.

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SPAIN'S TORPEDO FLEET.

NAVAL STRATEGY BOARD CONSIDERS ITS COMING A HOSTILE ACT.

They Call on the President and Request Him to Order the Flying Squadron to Intercept It Before It Is Joined by the Viscaya and Oquendo—He Replied That That Would Be an Act of War and He Could Not Do So Far Yet.

WASHINGTON, April 1.—An unusual and somewhat dramatic incident of the first session of the Cabinet to-day was a debate on the subject of the flying squadron. Three prominent naval officers, all detailed for duty at the Navy Department, who came to make an appeal for action toward preventing the Spanish torpedo boat flotilla from making a junction with the armored cruisers Viscaya and Oquendo before their arrival at West Indian waters. The officers were Capt. A. B. Crowninshield, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation; Capt. A. L. Barker, Special Aide to the Secretary of the Navy; and Commander Richardson Clover, Chief of the Naval Intelligence Office. Capt. Crowninshield and Commander Richardson Clover, both of whom are members of the Naval Strategy Board, Capt. Barker is the navy's representative on the Joint Military and Naval Board on Defence. These three men, with Mr. Roosevelt, have made most of the arrangements for an emergency under the direction of the Navy Department. Nearly all the preparatory measures have been on the recommendations of the Strategy Board. Their visit to the White House during the continuance of the Cabinet session was due to the receipt of official information that the Viscaya and Oquendo had left Havana. The Spanish fleet, it was learned, was en route to the West Indies, and the Spanish fleet, it was learned, was en route to the West Indies, and the Spanish fleet, it was learned, was en route to the West Indies.

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A conference between the members of the Strategy Board and Capt. Barker was held immediately, and it was decided that the three officers mentioned should go to the White House and explain to the President and the Cabinet the situation. Secretary Long, who was in the room, would be given to the United States by the Viscaya and the Oquendo managed to join forces with the torpedo flotilla. When the views of the Strategy Board on the subject were presented to the President and his advisers, there was considerable concern manifested. It was represented that the flotilla in its present condition would be at the mercy of Commodore Schley's flying squadron, but if augmented by the two armored cruisers, it could hope to make an effective resistance against the squadrons at Key West or Hampton Roads.

People who saw and read about the Viscaya when she was in New York harbor know that a magnificent vessel she is. She is a sister of the Oquendo. Another Spanish vessel of the same type and built on similar plans is the Santa Maria Teresa, which is also in the fleet. The Oquendo, (or Almirante Oquendo, to give her full name), the Viscaya and the Santa Teresa are built of steel, have twin screws, displacement 4,000 tons, and have a speed of 18 knots. They have side armor of from ten to twelve inches, and a deck protection of steel tapering from three to two inches. Their biggest guns are of 11-inch calibre. Each carries 484 officers and men. All three were built at Bilbao, in Spain. The Oquendo was built in 1891. Spain has no better ships than these for general use in war.

They were not quite so great a displacement as the Brooklyn, the flagship of the flying squadron, which displaces 9,163 tons, but have heavier armor on the sides and less for deck protection and on the superstructure. The Brooklyn carries 1,000 tons of armor, while the Oquendo and Viscaya carry 484 officers and men. All three were built at Bilbao, in Spain. The Oquendo was built in 1891. Spain has no better ships than these for general use in war.

A number of questions were asked Capt. Crowninshield and his brother officers while they were at the White House. They had to tell just how the augmented Spanish flotilla would compare with the vessels of the flying squadron, and what advantage would be gained by intercepting the flotilla before it fell in with the Viscaya and her sister ship. They were asked to state the chances of success if the flying squadron were to intercept the flotilla before it fell in with the Viscaya and her sister ship. They were asked to state the chances of success if the flying squadron were to intercept the flotilla before it fell in with the Viscaya and her sister ship.

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SAMPSON, COMMANDING THE KEY WEST SQUADRON, IS NOW ACTING UNDER ORDERS OF THE DEPARTMENT IN MAINTAINING CLOSE WATCH WITH SEARCHLIGHTS AND PATROL BOATS EACH NIGHT. GUNS FOR THE TUGS ARE ON HAND AT THE NEW YORK NAVY YARD, THE PLANES TO PROTECT THE YACHTS ARE BEING SENT FORWARD RAPIDLY, AND BY THE TIME THE CONVERSION TAKES PLACE THE OFFICERS AND CREWS WILL BE ON HAND.

IT IS WELL UNDERSTOOD BY THE OFFICIALS THAT, IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY TO FORM A CORDON AROUND THE FLEET WITH THE TUGS AND OTHER SMALLER VESSELS, THE TUGS MUST BE EMPLOYED TO PREVENT A NUMBER OF THE TUGS BEING SUNK, OWING TO THEIR REDUCED SPEED COMPARED TO THE FLEET TORPEDO CRAFT OF SPAIN AND AWARDNESS IN HANDLING. BUT AS EACH IS MOUNTED WITH FROM TWO TO FOUR RAPID-FIRE GUNS THEY WOULD MATERIALLY ASSIST THE TUGS IN KEEPING AT A DISTANCE THE BEST BOAT OF THE SPANISH FLEET. FIVE YACHTS OF GREATER SPEED AND CONSIDERABLE TONNAGE, UNDERGOING CONVERSION ALSO AT NEW YORK, ARE RAPIDLY ADVANCING TOWARD COMPLETION, AND FROM LAST REPORTS IT IS RECKONED THAT THEY SHOULD BE READY FOR DEPARTURE IN TEN DAYS AT THE OUTSIDE. THE TUGS ARE A STEEL PROTECTION AND CAN BE MADE READY MUCH QUICKER, BUT THE DELAY IN THE LARGER VESSELS IS DUE TO THE GREAT CARE NECESSARY IN GRINDING THE THIN PLATES OF THE YACHTS WITH A THICKNESS OF ANOTHER INCH OF PROTECTION. NONE OF THEM IS TO CARRY GUNS HEAVIER THAN SIX-POUNDER GUNS, AND THE PLANES TO PROTECT THE YACHTS ARE BEING SENT FORWARD RAPIDLY, AND BY THE TIME THE CONVERSION TAKES PLACE THE OFFICERS AND CREWS WILL BE ON HAND.

It is well understood by the officials that, if it becomes necessary to form a cordon around the fleet with the tugs and other smaller vessels, the tugs must be employed to prevent a number of the tugs being sunk, owing to their reduced speed compared to the fleet torpedo craft of Spain and awkwardness in handling. But as each is mounted with from two to four rapid-fire guns they would materially assist the tugs in keeping at a distance the best boat of the Spanish fleet. Five yachts of greater speed and considerable tonnage, undergoing conversion also at New York, are rapidly advancing toward completion, and from last reports it is reckoned that they should be ready for departure in ten days at the outside. The tugs are a steel protection and can be made ready much quicker, but the delay in the larger vessels is due to the great care necessary in grinding the thin plates of the yachts with a thickness of another inch of protection. None of them is to carry guns heavier than six-pounders, and the planes to protect the yachts are being sent forward rapidly, and by the time the conversion takes place the officers and crews will be on hand.

A report was current in Washington to-day that the Spanish torpedo flotilla had reached Porto Rico. The correspondent of THE SUN was unable to confirm it. Navy Department officials do not expect the flotilla to reach Porto Rico much before the 5th.

SPANISH SHIPS FOR HAVANA.

Two Big Supply Steamships had a Smaller One Sent to Havana to Meet Them.

Special Cable Despatch to THE SUN.
SANTANDER, March 31.—Sailed, steamship Viscaya, Spanish, Capt. Luazaraga, Havana.
VALENCIA, March 28.—Sailed, steamship Gran Antilla, Spanish, Capt. Bayona, for Havana.
VIGO, March 22.—Sailed, steamship Rojano, Spanish, Capt. Guerra, for Havana.

These ships have heretofore taken supplies to the Spanish Army in Cuba. They are doubtless laden with more stores and may have troops also. The Rojano is a large English-built freighter of 4,000 tons. She sailed from Liverpool for Santander on March 12. The Gran Antilla measures 3,337 tons, and is also British built. Her original port of departure in Spain was Barcelona, whence she sailed on March 24. The Viscaya is a smaller vessel. She sailed from Pensacola on March 1, arrived at Liverpool on March 21, and sailed thence for Santander on March 26.

THE NATIONAL GUARD READY.

500 New Recruits—Uniforms and Tents to Be Furnished.

ALBANY, April 1.—Adjt.-Gen. Tillamush has at his office all the details of the National Guard in the event of their being called into service. During the past few weeks the spirit of patriotism which has pervaded all classes throughout the State has resulted in the enlistment of some 500 new recruits. The Adjutant-General has determined to-day to purchase over 500 additional uniforms, which will cost about \$17,000. He also determined to purchase 600 tents for field service, which will cost \$12,000.

TROY, April 1.—Major James H. Lloyd, who was appointed to command the Thirtieth Battalion, received his commission to-day. He is the first of the Majors of the new battalions in the State to be appointed and receive a commission. He thus is honored by being the ranking officer of the new Majors. Major Lloyd and his staff are ready to take the train for the field of action at a half hour's notice. He said everything was held in readiness and there were arrangements with leading grocers in the city whereby a three days' supply of food would be ready at short notice. He said the experience of the day of the National Guard of Troy and Cohoes was ready to take the train for the field of action at a half hour's notice. He said everything was held in readiness and there were arrangements with leading grocers in the city whereby a three days' supply of food would be ready at short notice.

HEED SEES THE PRESIDENT.

Contradictory Reports of the Result of Their Interview.

WASHINGTON, April 1.—Speaker Reed had two interviews at the White House with President McKinley to-day. One of the results of these talks to-night is that it is reported that Speaker Reed informed the President that he had done his full duty in standing by the President's policy, but, inasmuch as all diplomatic relations with Spain had been severed, he should not be asked to stand further in the way of the House, which was evidently determined upon decisive action against Spain. A friend of President McKinley, who said that he was acquainted with the Speaker, declared that the President and the Speaker had had a long and friendly talk.

"On the contrary," the Speaker informed the President that a more conservative tone was apparent in the House, that the full responsibility for anything that portended war were being placed on the President, and that he was not prepared to be fully appreciated, while before there had been no serious apprehension of war. The Speaker then assured the President that he did not believe it would be necessary for him to take a stand to prevent an unwelcome outbreak.

The President's message, it was added, will be such a character as to convince the House of the wisdom of the Administration's policy was the policy of the sober-minded and conservative people.

THE SINKING OF WAR.

Secretary Gage Confers with Bankers as to the Best Means of Raising Funds.

WASHINGTON, April 1.—Secretary Gage began to-day a series of conferences with bankers, Eastern and Western, to ascertain the best practical means for raising war funds. The Secretary of the Treasury has been a strong supporter of the Administration's policy was the policy of the sober-minded and conservative people.

Washington, April 1.—The Cuban autonomist cabinet has sent a cable despatch to President McKinley protesting against the assertions cast by American politicians upon autonomy, which, the Cabinet declares, is a success, being supported by a majority of the Cubans.

MADRID, April 1.—The appeal of the Cuban autonomists to President McKinley, the text of which has been cabled here, is much commented upon in Madrid.

Long Island R. R. New Cars. New Road Car engines. Roadway fitted. Extra system ballasted.

MORE AUXILIARY SHIPS.

SIX WERE PRACTICALLY ADDED TO THE NAVY YESTERDAY.

They Include the Cromwell Line Steamship Creola, the Yacht Josephine and Sovereign, and Three Steam Tugs—All to Be Redefined and Join the Atlantic Squadron.

WASHINGTON, April 1.—There was vim and energy injected into the naval emergency preparations after the first Cabinet meeting to-day. When Secretary Long returned to the Navy Department, after hearing the Spanish answer read and discussed, he gave orders which were carried into effect with alacrity.

No less than six vessels for the naval service were bought or arrangements for their purchase by the Government made before the department closed for the day, and all will be paid for out of the \$500,000 emergency fund.

The craft which the Government will add to its naval list by the action taken to-day are these: the steamship Creola, one of the steamship, and two fine yachts. Two of them have been already secured, two more are now practically in the possession of the Government, and the others will be impressed to-morrow. Arrangements for the transfer of all of them to the Federal authorities have been made.

The new additions to the effective naval force are the Cromwell Line steamship Creola, the steam yacht Josephine and Sovereign, the steam tug Saturn, and two of the best colliers which run out of New York.

The Creola is now en route to New York with a cargo. She is to be used as an ambulance ship, and immediately after her arrival at New York will be taken in charge by the Government and sent to Newport News, Va., to be fitted at the big shipbuilding plant there for hospital purposes. She is due to reach New York on Monday.

Dr. Van Rensselaer, the Surgeon-General of the Navy, selected the Creola, and her refitting will take place under his direction.

Yards will be arranged and light ports cut, so that wounded sailors will have the most cheerful surroundings. The Creola, when converted, will hoist the flag of the Red Cross Society and proceed to Key West for service with Capt. Sampson's fleet.

Capt. E. V. Gager, Commodore of the Cromwell line, has applied for her command. The orders to buy colliers were partly the result of the visit to the White House during the Cabinet meeting to-day of the members of the Naval Strategy Board, who saw Secretary Long and the President and obtained authority to purchase these desirable vessels immediately. The purchase of the Saturn was consummated this afternoon by the Naval Auxiliary Board, which has been reduced in speed through the conversion of the Saturn into a hospital ship. The Saturn is a steam yacht of 677 gross tons, 228.5 feet long, 27.8 feet beam, and 16.7 feet deep. She was also built in 1890, at Brooklyn, and her papers are signed by the Collector of the Customs at New York.

The Josephine belongs to P. B. Widener of Philadelphia, the street railway magnate. She has a gross tonnage of 545.68, is 191.6 feet long, 25.5 feet beam, and 15.8 feet deep. She was built in 1890 at Elizabeth, N. J., and hails from Philadelphia. She was recently rebuilt to suit Mr. Widener's ideas by Harlan & Hollingsworth of Wilmington, Del. It was rumored this evening that the Creola will be sent to Brooklyn Navy Yard for refitting. The Creola will carry arms and will be under the protection of the Red Cross. The colliers will each have one small rapid-fire gun. The yachts will be equipped with the best battery available for vessels of their size and type.

There was considerable worry shown by the naval officials this afternoon over the fact that the new cruiser Albany, purchased from Brazil, could not be made ready in time for service with the American naval forces in home waters if war came very soon.

The Albany is not expected to leave New York. She has been formally turned over to the United States, and there would probably be no objection by the British Government to allowing her to leave England after hostilities had begun, but it is the belief of the Navy Department that her passage across the Atlantic will be attended by too many risks. The probability of war has also put an end to the hopes of the Government that warships may be obtained in Italy. Commander Brownson may be recalled from Rome, where he is negotiating with the Italian Minister of Marine, and placed in command of an auxiliary cruiser.

Capt. Sampson, commanding the Key West squadron, telegraphed the Navy Department this afternoon that he would at once have the Indiana, Iowa, New York, Marblehead and Detroit scraped by divers instead of sending them to dry dock for that purpose. All the ships have been reduced in speed through the conversion along their keels. It would be exceedingly risky to withdraw them from the squadron and the divers will endeavor to perform the work which could be more effectively done in dry docks. Each ship has been supplied with a complete set of diving apparatus, so that there will be no lack of working material.

Chief Constructor Hibbard again urged on the Navy Department to-day that the American liners St. Paul and St. Louis be impressed at once. It will take at least two weeks to convert them into auxiliary cruisers, and Chief Hibbard contended that it was better to start the work without further delay. There is some opposition to his recommendation, however, in the Board of Naval Bureau Chiefs. Capt. O'Neill, the Chief of Ordnance, and Commander Bradford, the Chief of the Equipment Bureau, are against it, while it is favored by Assistant Secretary Roosevelt and Capt. Crowninshield, Chief of the Navigation Bureau. The President does not want to expend the large sum of money necessary to purchase these big steamships and has not yet committed himself to the purchase of them. Both these vessels would be sent to the flying squadron. Notification has been given by the Navy Department to several steamship lines that their vessels may be needed.

AUTONOMIST CABINET PROTESTS.

A Cable Despatch to President McKinley Declaring That Autonomy is a Success.

HAVANA, April 1.—The Cuban autonomist cabinet has sent a cable despatch to President McKinley protesting against the assertions cast by American politicians upon autonomy, which, the Cabinet declares, is a success, being supported by a majority of the Cubans.

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WARSHIPS LEAVE HAVANA.

Viscaya and Oquendo Sailed—Protection for American Citizens.

HAVANA, April 1.—When the Viscaya and Almirante Oquendo sailed to-day at 5 o'clock an immense and enthusiastic Spanish crowd gathered on the wharves and around the bay to cheer them.

Both warships sailed in a northeasterly direction. Their destination is still kept a mystery here. The Spanish people were wild with joy at seeing them sail.

The warships go under command of Capt. Louis Pastor.

The Spanish gunboat Vicente Yañes Pinzon left Havana last night and returned to-day to port.

All the batteries and the forts are engaged in cannon practice.

The situation here is very critical. Captain-General Blanco told the Colonels of the volunteers that the American citizens here should be protected against any attempt to attack them or the American Consulate.

The indignation of the mob against the United States grows every minute. In view of the situation Gen. Blanco has summoned to the palace nearly all the authorities, among whom are the Governor of Havana, the Autonomist Cabinet, the most important officials, and the Bishop.

The Junta will not leave the Palace until the gravity of the situation is over.

Gen. Blanco says that if President McKinley does not withdraw his demand for the evacuation of Cuba, he will leave the Junta to take care of the situation.

A despatch from Madrid to Gen. Blanco says that the note of President McKinley to Spain was so grave that the Government has no authority to discuss it, but must refer it to the Cortes.

COMMENTS OF LONDON PAPERS.

War Regarded as Probable—Spain Declared to Be in an Impossible Position.

Special Cable Despatch to THE SUN.
LONDON, April 2.—The morning papers again devote considerable space to editorial comments on the Spanish-American situation. They regard the prospect of averting war as extremely shadowy.

The Standard considers Spain's position impossible, and says that the Queen Regent, the Government, and the people will show the noblest heroism, highest patriotism, and finest sense of dignity by preferring an honorable peace to an inevitably disastrous war.

The Daily News says it hopes that even at the present moment there may be found a redemptive Cuban wrong through the intervention of the United States, without setting aside the rights of Spain too unceremoniously. The Pope, it adds, could not crown his life in a more beneficent way than by finding the golden bridge over which Spain may retreat from an impossible position.

The Chronicle is impressed by the terrible responsibility resting on each Government, but says it has no doubt that the United States have the highest claim to the sympathies of civilization. Their action may be quibbled, but it is unselfish, courageous, and actuated by motives of humanity.

The Daily Graphic says that nothing now remains but to fight. War, of course, is terrible, but is no more terrible than the long-drawn-out tragedy of Spanish domination in Cuba. Few reasonable people doubt that the United States are in a much better position than Spain in the present attitude.

The Daily Mail says that every lover of liberty will wish that the war will be as short as it is sure to be decisive. It adds: "It is a more commonplace to say how great is Great Britain's anxiety for America's success."

MERRITT INSPECTS FORT HANCOCK.

And Reports in Cipher to Washington on Some Changes to Be Made.

Major-Gen. Wesley Merritt, Commander of the Department of the East, and several members of his staff inspected yesterday the fortifications at Fort Hancock, Sandy Hook. The following officers accompanied Gen. Merritt: Lieut. H. C. Hale, L. H. Strother and T. B. Velt, aides-de-camp; Lieut.-Col. John W. Clous, Judge Advocate; Col. John L. Rodger, assistant Inspector; Capt. James Allen, signal officer, and Lieut. A. S. Cummings and Charles F. Parker.

The party left Governor's Island at 9